

GIOVANNI ANSELMO

In collaboration with Fondazione Giovanni e Alda Anselmo ETS

Opening: Sunday 11 October 2026, 11 am – 5 pm

Until 28 February 2027

From Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am – 1 pm | 3 – 6.30 pm

Giovanni Anselmo was a leading figure in the Arte Povera movement from the 1960s onwards. His first exhibition at Galleria Tucci Russo took place in 1978.

Central to his art – which brings together nature, perception, philosophy and the human being – is the concept of energy, which manifests itself through the physical laws governing the universe, such as gravity and magnetism. As he himself stated, his works are *'the physicalisation of the force of an action, of the energy of a situation or an event, etc., not merely the experience of this at the level of a note, a sign or a still life. It is necessary, for example, that the energy of a twist should exist with its true force; it would certainly not exist through its form alone. I believe that to work in this direction – given that energy exists in the most varied forms and situations – there is a need for the utmost freedom of choice and use of materials [...] My objects are physical energy; forces are channelled and directed towards a single point so that, in each instance, a state of unstable equilibrium, potential movement, tension or compression results, to which the structures and visual elements of my objects are subordinate.'* (GA)

ROOM 1

Senza titolo (Untitled), 1965: *'...a rod extends as far as possible, relying solely on its own weight – as if the rod were rising as high as possible to remain vertical – whilst the other [Senza titolo, 1966] has taken the form of a drop which, instead of falling, rises. A rising drop suggests the idea of lightness more than a falling one; it defies its own weight. [...] In those same years, I remember using a spirit level – which is simply a suspended spirit level – in which verticality can be controlled by means of the air bubble incorporated within it.'* (GA)

In the same room, further highlighting this tension in the search for balance is the work **Verticale** (Vertical), 1966–1967, is on display, in which a sheet of Plexiglas is suspended from the wall. A spirit level is attached to one side of the sheet; to keep the work level, the hole from which the sheet is hung is off-centre to compensate for the additional weight.

ROOM 2

Grigi che si alleggeriscono verso oltremare (Greys that grow lighter towards "oltremare"), 1982

'A stone usually lies on the ground. In this case, however, it is suspended high up. Thanks to the force of gravity, the slipknot holds the stone in place. Paradoxically, therefore, we can say that the stone remains suspended thanks to the force of gravity. The stone is lighter: any object moved away from the centre of the Earth becomes lighter. If we think in pictorial terms and wish to lighten the grey, we add a little white. With the stones, I lighten the greys by suspending them on the wall. It is a way of considering the stone as a colour (just as paint, made up of pigments, can be considered stone), not only in terms of its hue, but also in terms of its weight. Colour, understood in this sense, allows us to view traditional pictorial categories in relation to gravity, to the Earth. Sometimes I use ultramarine blue. Ultramarine allows us to orient ourselves outwards, towards a 'beyond'.' (GA)

Senza titolo (*Untitled*), 1988-1989

'A slab of granite and a canvas of the same dimensions are suspended from the wall by means of a steel cable and slipknots, with the stone positioned in front of the canvas. The balance perceived by the eye is not the actual one: in fact, it is the slab that holds up the canvas, pulling it close to itself via the loop; it is the energy intrinsic to colour and gesture that lightens the material and supports the work. This physical arrangement embodies the ideal of painting.' (MD)

Cielo accorciato, (*Shortened Heavens*), 1969-1987

This is a work conceived to enter into dialogue with the sky. The text is engraved on the upper section of the granite block, which is positioned vertically so that it appears to shorten the vertical line of the sky by 1 metre and 30 centimetres.

Verde chiaro permanente al centro e intorno un disegno (*Permanent light green in the center and around a drawing*), 1980

A drawing of a compass with the needle pointing north-south, placed on the floor in accordance with its orientation, indicates our position in space and the invisible energy of magnetic fields. It suggests that the interior space is connected to the exterior, and thus to the rest of the world. This concept is echoed by the block of iron set into the wall, the upper part of which is painted permanent light green, evoking the exterior, the open air.

Lato destro (*Right side*), 1970

'[...]There are two versions of Right side [Lato destro], one consists of a pencil drawing on paper and the other is a color photograph. The drawing is a normal self-portrait in the mirror, which therefore makes me see myself differently from how others see me. The photographic version follows the same principle, but printing the negative upside down. Normally, my right side coincides with the left side of the person looking at me, while in this case, given the reversal of the negative, it is as if this person is looking through me. By inverting the negative I show my face as it feels, as it is and not as it appears. I had placed the 'right side' sign on the right side of my neck, written backwards, so that when the negative was reversed it would appear written in the correct direction. With the inversion of the photographic negative I therefore obtain a self-portrait accelerated with respect to the traditional ways of making it in the history of art and based on the inversion of visual habits.' (GA)

Texts by Giovanni Anselmo (GA) and Maddalena Disch (MD), taken from:

"Giovanni Anselmo", curated by Maddalena Disch, ADV Publishing House, Lugano 1998

"Giovanni Anselmo", MAMbo, Bologna / Hopefulmonster, Turin 2007

"Giovanni Anselmo. Oltre l'orizzonte", MAXXI, Rome / Poligrafa, Barcelona 2024

Giovanni Anselmo (Borgofranco d'Ivrea (Turin, Italy), 1934 - Turin, 2023) lived and worked in Turin. His first solo exhibition in 1968 was followed by numerous exhibitions in Italian and international museums and institutions, the most recent of which are: MAXXI – Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2024); Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain (2024); Accademia di San Luca, Rome (2019); Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice (2017); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin (2016); Musée d'art Moderne et Contemporain de Saint-Étienne, France (2015); Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2013); MAMbo, Bologna (2006); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, United Kingdom (2005); and Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Germany (2004). In 2019 he was awarded the prestigious Presidente della Repubblica by the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca; in 1990 he received the Leone d'Oro for Painting in Venice. He has participated in the Venice Biennale in 1972, 1978, 1980, 1986, 1990, and 2007 and in Documenta in Kassel in 1972 and 1982. In 2027, a solo exhibition dedicated to his work is due to be held at Palazzo Reale in Milan, curated by Ilaria Bernardi.